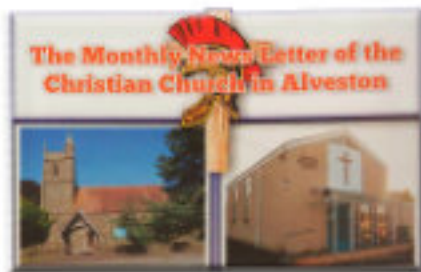


HELMET

May 2020
No 501



EDITOR'S JOTTINGS

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Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Helmet editors or committee.

With thanks to Ken Pearce for the front cover

We welcome articles and news of interest from individuals and groups within the Parish of Alveston. Please send articles, digitally when possible, to alvestonmag@gmail.com

Or deliver to the post box at 1 Beech Close, Alveston. BS35 3NH, marked 'for Helmet'.

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As we anticipated last month we are now still officially in lockdown so rather than have a lot of magazines in print which later have to be recycled we decided from the start to go digital.

Please let others know how they can access it via the St Helens' church website (sthelensalvs.co.uk/helmet, but of course if you are reading this you'll already know that). We are not advertising any imminent events so there's no worry about missing anything. Having said that, there's probably a lot you are missing doing, and people too. What parties we will have when the end of this war is finally declared over.

There's a list of contents on the back cover. We haven't yet made plans for the June edition but do please submit articles (before the middle of May will be fine) and we will see what we can put in and how we will print/distribute nearer the time. It will be lovely to have lots of photos of window and street displays, with permission of the photographer and home owner of course. And stories of what you have been getting up to. I believe museums are hoping to collate memories of these times for future generations.

I have particularly appreciated living here in our village in the last few weeks. We have access to a beautiful and variety filled countryside, distant views, wildflowers and blossom on trees are abundant, and the alpaca herd has attracted walkers. I regularly see people to chat with (from a distance), and people are generally thoughtful about crossing the road and saying 'thankyou'. We clap and make a noise on Thursday evenings, and we look out for each other and support our NHS. Keep it up.

Diane Barnard

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United Reformed Church, Thornbury	Sundays 11 am and as advertised
Quaker Meeting, The Chantry, Thornbury	Sundays at 10:30
Thornbury Baptist Church	9:15, 11:00 and 6:30 most Sundays, check the website
Tytherington Baptist Church	Sundays at 11:00

A LETTER FROM OUR VICAR

Nobody would have believed me if at 2019 Carol Service I had prophesied that by April schools, pubs, restaurants, theatres, football grounds, and churches would be closed and most of us would be confined to our homes. We all now live differently because of Covid 19 but as we consider the future perhaps we need to take up the challenge to think differently?

Before this crisis much of the way we lived was dominated by an economic mindset that simply asked the question how much financial value can we extract? In just a few weeks, that which so many said was impossible has happened, we have, as a consequence of this disease, abandoned this narrow ideology in order to produce and do things that bring benefit and healing to all. The consequence is that Greta Thunberg's vision on her visit to Bristol February 20th 2020 of a pollution free Bristol has almost become a reality. As I write at the end of April, a new city hospital has been planned and constructed in just few weeks and homeless people have been quickly housed. In our communities we have seen the Lord's command to love our neighbour as ourselves practically put into a practice by dedicated teams of community volunteers and lots of us have valued getting to know our neighbours better.

As we emerge from the crisis we of course will have to grieve especially for those who have laid down their lives for the sake of others. I hope we can also take the positive things that have happened and make changes to the way we live.

Rev David Moss

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Contact details if you need the vicar
or a licensed lay minister are on the
inside front cover



With thanks to Angela Daymond for this photo
taken on her daily exercise walk. It's interesting to
see things from a different angle.

ST HELEN'S CHURCH NEWS

Since the end of March life has changed for all of us as we have obeyed the Governments request to stay home, stay safe and save the NHS. Since that time the doors of all churches and places of worship have been closed. Something that we did not ever think would happen. Hopefully by the time you read this some of the restrictions will have been lifted and the new 'normal' way of life will have begun to take shape.

During this time we have had to rethink how to do 'church', we could not just close our doors as our task is to serve our community. This was a time to support our community which, for us, means not just our congregation but the wider community of Alveston and its surrounding villages.

Rev'd David, along with his colleague, Rev'd Steve Oram joined together under the on line name of RevsRural and took Church on line. Our weekly church services were re-born. Hopefully some of you will have watched our weekly services on You Tube. They are not quite 'church as we know it', but from the positive responses we have received they have provided help during these difficult times. For us, they have united our Benefice and extended our reach to people outside our community, as over the weeks the services have been watched by a wider audience than we could ever have hoped.

At this point in time we cannot give you any details of when the Church will be open or when groups and activities will resume. We suggest that you check on the website or contact one of the Ministry Team for updates, their details can be found on the inside cover of this magazine.

As the pandemic hopefully comes to an end we would like to remind you that we are here to support and help you so please feel free to contact us if you think we can be of any help whatsoever.

In the meantime take care and stay safe.

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ALVESTON METHODIST CHURCH NEWS & NOTES

What an unusual month of April. The church is closed until further notice. It was so strange not to be involved in Holy Week. No Agape supper, no Good Friday meditation, no fun decorating the church for Easter (so no traditional doughnuts either), and no joyous worship together on Easter Day. But, and a big but, other wonderful opportunities have arisen. Some of us oldies have had to get our act together and learn how to work WhatsApp, Zoom and other means of keeping in touch with family, friends and colleagues. A small group has been working with Heidi and the Ark team on Zoom, to continue a Pioneering course, designed to extend our presence in the community. Another Zoom group has started and is continuing studying the meaning and effect of our faith in the modern world. Our minister, Rev'd Simon Edwards, is using Facebook to give us a weekly short talk with a couple of worship songs - well worth watching. The Methodist.org.uk site has many service resources on line. The BBC is producing excellent worship programmes on Sundays. So maybe this quiet period, which may be extensive, can be a positive reflective time for personal faith development.

Meanwhile the good deeds of the residents of Alveston continue to be a blessing.

The phones must buzz with friends and neighbours 'just checking you're OK', conversations. 'Over the fence' we speak to everyone who passes by on their daily exercise. New friends are being made. We do hope this bonhomie continues long after our movements are no longer restricted. For those who can leave the house the daily walk is keeping us fit and it's a pleasure to walk the quiet roads and footpaths admiring the blackthorn blossom and soon the hawthorn and bluebells.

Never have lawn edges been so trimmed, windows so cleaned and drawers so tidied. It has come to something when there is time to dig out the prolific dandelions every day. The best bit is not feeling too guilty about using the sun-lounger, reading favourite books and watching the frogspawn and newts develop in the garden pond.

All in all, if we can follow the instructions about how to keep safe and not get infected, it is proving to be a fruitful period of our lives.

In all this interval we of course continue to pray for those who cannot make light of the situation. There are many local people on the front line or may have already been infected. Working together is what the residents of Alveston are good at and it is a blessing to be part of this caring society.

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METHODIST CHURCH NEWS CONTD.

We have also been trying to keep an eye on our older neighbours and help them out where possible. The phone lines and communication services on-line will be buzzing in Alveston over the next few months, as everybody does what they can to make life comfortable and interesting.

Our minister: Rev Simon Edwards: 01454 418176;
email: simon.edwards@methodist.org.uk

All the worship services and meetings are cancelled until further notice. Search for 'Simon Edwards' on You Tube to find the replacement services.

Check notices on the church door and entries in our Facebook page – 'Alveston Methodist Church'

From the Helmet Archives 1975

Christian Aid - Thornbury District total so far is £1179 -This included hunger lunches at Alveston and Almondsbury, the garden party and concert at Alveston and a concert at Olveston (Audrey Kirk, Hon. Treasurer, Thornbury District Maud Belsten (organiser for Alveston) gives details of the village contribution: envelopes £148.95; Mrs Savery's garden party £15.05; concert £30.21; total £194.21 (an increase of £14 over last year). Grateful thanks to all who made this possible.

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As food prices rise, and we contemplate the impact of our globalised food industry on greenhouse gas emissions, stop buying the stuff and then throwing it in the bin.... If food waste was a country, it would be the third biggest emitter, apparently – that's more than aviation..... (Nikki Jones)

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METHODIST CHURCH ARCHIVES

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James Lackington converted to Methodist on moving to Bristol and hearing John Wesley preach at the New Room. While in London he turned his back on Methodism and ridiculed Methodists in books which he wrote. He then re-converted to Methodism and was a practising Methodist and local preacher when he moved to this area where his third wife's relatives lived. And here, in retirement, he had built the small Methodist Chapel on the site of the graveyard opposite the Down Chapel. The Chapel was built of stone and was 30' x 21' and 14' high with a tin roof. There does not appear to be a record of a name or of any writing over the door. James Lackington, however, was responsible for building three chapels all said to be called 'The Temple' and so the Down Chapel must have originally been called 'The Temple', although it is always recorded just as a Primitive Methodist Chapel on old maps. The other two chapels which Lackington had built, in Taunton and Budleigh Salterton, both had, on the front, the inscription, 'This Temple is erected as a monument of God's mercy in convincing an infidel of the important truths of Christianity. Man, consult thy whole existence and be safe.'

Although all the chapels have been demolished, the other two were replaced on their sites by more modern buildings which are still open for worship today and the Budleigh Salterton one was most unusual in being built before the first Anglican Church in the town.

If you have any photographs or memories of older or present buildings at Greenhill which you are happy to share, please let Christine Dugdale (01454 41309) know and help us to celebrate the 50th anniversary in 2021.



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For a variety of reasons attendance was rather low at our March meeting. However those of us that were able to attend looked forward to an interesting evening.

We began by welcoming two new members and our WI advisor Margaret Myers who was to give a talk about her "unofficial" career as a fencing champion. Now seventy-two Margaret still competes as a veteran and very light and nimble she is! Many younger people would like to be able to dash backwards and forwards the way that she can.

Margaret had spent her school years in Kenya where her father worked. She grew up leading a very outdoors sort of life doing a lot of sport. She was never very interested in academic subjects.

The family came back to Britain when she was in her teens and she took a job in NHS administration. She joined the Royal Naval Reserve at eighteen and became a 3rd officer specialising in communications. During the Gulf War she took over from a full time officer at RAF Yeovilton who was sent to Iraq. She passed her "escape from a sunken helicopter" test and did a "drop" from a helicopter onto a ship, then returned to the helicopter too!

About the time she joined the RNR she also took up fencing. It has the advantage of being an indoor sport so British weather is not a problem. She began representing the Navy and Wales when she was about twenty four.

A few years later she married, had two sons and stopped work for eight years, but her husband encouraged her to keep competing. She returned to work part time until they were in their teens and then worked full time again until she retired at sixty-five. She also spent thirty years with the Royal Naval Reserve. All through she continued to represent Wales and the Navy and represented Wales at the Commonwealth Games last year

ALVESTON

CANCELLED

Visitors are welcome - in normal circumstances

After demonstrating some of the techniques and explaining the finer points of fencing Margaret removed her fencing gear so we could all have a good look at it. Some of us had not realised that fencers are all wired up under their clothing so that the tip of the weapon can register points of contact. Those of us that had never taken any interest in the sport learned a lot that evening!

After Margaret's talk and demonstration we had refreshments and then the business of the meeting.

We voted to take part in looking after the Jubilee Hall garden and to wear name badges as of the next meeting. When will that be? We also voted to go on Applegates day trip to Seaton in August. Let's hope that will take place! We were reminded to sign up for any of the WI events on offer and asked to bring unwanted wool for the Baby Bear Knitting Project. We were also asked to make up a team for the Twinning Association quiz. But for now all we can do is do the knitting ourselves and wait for life to go back to normal.

EXERCISING ONLINE ..

Local Alveston fitness instructor Sam Hutchinson is now running online classes to help keep people moving during social distancing. Sam normally teaches Pilates, Zumba and older adults' aerobics in the local area and at Thornbury Leisure Centre. Many of you may have already attended her classes.

Zumba, Pilates, Recycled Teenagers (older adults' aerobics) and Orthopaedic Pilates classes are now available via Zoom. These classes offer a great opportunity to keep fit and to also connect with people outside of your own home without having to venture outside your door! Classes are also available as recorded sessions that can be done at your own convenience. These include Latin Aerobics (anyone remember Salsacise? Alveston residents regularly did this on Thursday nights until about 9 years ago when Zumba became the fashion!), seated exercise, resistance band workouts, various Pilates sessions and also older adults aerobics and toning. If you'd like to join the classes, or would like more information then please visit www.samhutchinsonfitness.com or contact Sam on 07977 632003 / sam@samhutchinsonfitness.com

Sam would also like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who have supported her during this time. Stay safe and stay sane!

SKELETONS IN THE CUPBOARD BY FRANCES HOUGHTON

I first became interested in researching my family history in 1971 when a Sunday newspaper published an article about it. We had a number of interesting stories circulating around the family about various people, some possibly still alive, some long-dead. I hoped to find some answers to the puzzles.

My mother cautioned me about delving into the past. She warned me that I might unearth things which some members of the family might prefer didn't come to light. I knew quite a lot about my parents younger years, both from them and my father's sister, so I had no fears of bringing to light anything really unpleasant about my parents' or grandparents' generations. My grandparents were all dead and I thought that anything further back could be regarded as just plain "interesting". so I went to London and spent an exciting morning in the rooms at Somerset House which held the indexes to Births, Marriages and Deaths and ordered several certificates. Tracing the family could be hard physical work then. Each index book, for three months of a year, weighed about a stone. If you didn't know exactly what date or place you were looking for, or you couldn't find the person, you could get a lot of exercise going through a lot of books! I once searched from 1878 to 1919 before I tracked down a death.

So what did I find? Well, I couldn't find a birth certificate for William Wooldridge Tench my paternal grandfather, in spite of knowing the exact date and that it was in Birmingham. Yes, I tried looking for him in other years and places and in his mother's maiden name, but that didn't work either. I then found his parents, George Osman Tench and Elizabeth Wooldridge married in 1880 some 16 months after his birth...oh well. Just one of life's mysteries to hopefully be resolved one day. I found grandfather George's birth in 1853, but I couldn't find his parents (Oswald Orm Tench and Mary Cook, nee Robinson) marriage....another little mystery.

My other grandfather, Willie Norman had an older brother "Harry" and two younger sisters. Emily and Elizabeth. His brother had died in a pit accident in South Wales soon after my mother was born in 1921, but his sisters were the real mystery. They had supposedly been caught soliciting while in London in 1911 to be bridesmaids at my grandparents wedding. One of my grandmother's brothers put up the bail money so they could be at the wedding. Grandfather was furious and packed them off back to Somerset as soon as the wedding was over. He never spoke of them until my mother told him about about a visit we had made in 1959 to his childhood home, Plud Farm, in Stringston. A lady in her 60's had recently visited the farm because she wanted to see her childhood home just once before she died. Grandfather simply said, "that would have been Lizzie". Presumably brother "Harry" had kept in touch with the girls until his death and relayed information on to grandfather. Harry was another mystery. I couldn't find his birth or death registrations. No one fitted the information I had about him.

What were the answers to my mysteries? Well Grandfather William Wooldridge (Tench) turned out to be Joseph William Wooldridge. I hadn't known about his first name, but according to "Find a Grave" his burial record gives that name first. He was born in Birmingham workhouse. His father is still a mystery. Another family story suggests George Osman Tench could have been his father but I have no proof.

Oswald Orm Tench married Mary Cook in 1869, some 16 years after their son George was born. There was one snag, Oswald had married Mary Emms in 1868! Oswald disappeared soon after the 1871 census and I eventually, by sheer chance, found his burial record in Philadelphia in 1893. I later learned he and Mary (Emms) had emigrated to the USA in 1873.

There is no official record of my great aunts being prosecuted for prostitution. I don't know what to make of the story. I eventually found that Emily had gone to Lancashire to join some relations soon after my grandparents marriage. She married in 1913 and had four sons, two of whom died in infancy. She was deserted while the others were still very young. Life was hard and it made a very hard woman of her, according to her granddaughter Elaine.

Elizabeth also had a difficult life. She never married but had an affair in the early 1920's with a Joseph Axford. Apparently she refused to marry him! She had three daughters. The first, Gwendoline had learning difficulties and mental health problems. She spent much of her life in institutions. Twins Lilian and Mabel followed in 1923. Mabel died in infancy but Lilian grew up, married at the end of WW2, moved to Lancashire and had a son. Gwendoline had a daughter, Susan in 1955. She is now a widow and lives in Tetbury.

"Harry" turned out to be William Henry Norman and he moved to Mountain Ash where he married Florence Annie Beatrice Bounds. He was killed in a rockfall in Nixon's Navigation Colliery on 24th December 1924. His only child Doris was born 30th August 1925. His widow never remarried and died relatively young. Doris married twice and spent much of her life on the isle of Thanet. Most of her children and grandchildren are still there.

So what next? Well DNA testing is advancing at such a pace it may be possible to determine all sorts of things in two or three years that we can only dream of today. There is talk of being able to determine, at least in part, which autosomal genes we inherit from our mothers and which from our fathers. Records are being uploaded to the family history websites such as "FindmyPast" and "Ancestry" at an equally amazing pace. Many of them are not only transcriptions and indexes but photographic images as well. This gives us the opportunity to see our ancestors own handwriting so we can assess the quality of the transcriptions and correct any errors in them.

Am I disturbed by any of the things I've found out about my ancestors? Not really. It's impossible for me to be responsible for their actions. I don't approve of some of the things that they did, but I can't change anything. It is always sad to find that people have died prematurely, especially from causes which we would now consider preventable.

The past really is another country and they did things differently there.

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Environmental Health and Trading Standards 01454 868001

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Leisure and Libraries 01454 868006.

Leisure centres 0300 333 0300

Planning & Transportation 01454 868004

Street Care 01454 868000, streetcare@southglos.gov.uk (dog warden,
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For more information www.southglos.gov.uk

UTILITIES

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Gas leak – 0800 111999

Police/Crime – non emergency call 101.

Sign up for community alerts www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/account

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Neighbourhood Watch – register at Ourwatch www.asnwa.org/
registration;

Fraud prevention & alerts www.actionfraud.police.uk 0300 123 2040

Crimestoppers - Report anonymously 0800 555111.

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org>

Health – NHS advice for non emergency situation 111 (24 hours).
www.nhs.uk.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The following groups and organisations meet regularly in normal circumstances :

St Helen's Pre-school Little Stars at St Helen's School: Mon-Fri 8:50-15:30
 Toddler Group, Alveston Methodist Church Hall: Mondays 9:45-11:45 (term time)
 Orthopaedic Pilates, CTK: Mondays 9:30am from 6th April (07977632003)
 Fitness Pilates, Alveston Youth Centre: Tuesdays 11:00
 Thornbury & S Glos Amateur Radio Club, The Chantry: Wed 7:30pm (413 177)
 Luncheon Club, Alveston Methodist Church Hall: Thursdays 2:15
 Zumba Fitness, St Helen's School: Thursdays 6-6:55 pm and 8:05-9pm
 Fitness Pilates, St Helen's School: Thursdays 7-7:55 pm
 Thornbury Chamber Players: MC: fortnightly Thurs 7:45-9:45 pm
 Sharon Phillips School of Dancing, St Helen's School: Mondays; Jubilee Hall: Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Sat; Alveston Youth Centre: Fri and Sat.
 Play and Praise, Alveston Methodist Church Hall: 1st and 3rd Fridays 2:15-3:15
 Breakfast Club, Alveston Methodist Church Hall: 1st and 3rd Sundays 10:00

MAY DIARY 2020

Fri	1 13:00	Thornbury Carers Support Group.(Sian 07875 400 301)	Chantry
Mon	4 19:00	Alveston Parish Council - Planning Committee Bush Room	JH
Mon	4 19:30	Alveston Gardens Assoc -Villa Gardens of Italian Lakes	JH
Tue	5 10:30	Thornbury Macular and Low Vision Support Group	TMH
Tue	5 19:30	Northavon Dolls House Club - 501 994 5	MH
Wed	6 10:30	Chantry	MH
Mon			JH
Sat			TBA
Mon	10 19:00	Alveston Parish Council - Planning Committee	JH
Mon	18 19:30	Alveston Parish Council - Parish Council Meeting	JH
Tues	19 19:30	Alveston Singers	TBA
Wed	27 19:30	Alveston Local History Society - Gloucester Cathedral's Royal Connections - Richard Cann	MC

CANCELLED

Alveston Repair Cafés are booked for 12th September and the 14th Nov at St Helen's Church Alveston between 10am and 1pm.

2nd May is CANCELLED

Please pass on your annual programmes and details of future events (deadline 1st of the month) to Tony Houghton, 2 Beanhill Crescent, BS35 3JG. They can be accepted by email to Diaryhelmet@btinternet.com

AH	Armstrong Hall
CH	Cossham Hall
CTK	Christ the King Social Club
	ThornburY
JH	Jubilee Hall
MC	Alveston Methodist Church
MH	Alveston Methodist Church Hall
TMH	Thornbury Methodist Church Hall

PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO COVID-19 EVENTS HAVE CURRENTLY BEEN CANCELLED OR POSTPONED. WE HAVE DECIDED NOT TO PRINT THIS MONTH AND PUBLISHED AS LATE AS POSSIBLE BUT NEWS STILL GOES OUT OF DATE QUICKLY. WE SUGGEST THAT YOU CHECK WITH THE ORGANISERS IF YOU ARE UNSURE.

KEEP SAFE, WASH YOUR HANDS, LOOK OUT FOR NEIGHBOURS AND FOLLOW GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES. Beware of scam emails and

DON'T FORGET THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL DISTANCING.

LET'S CONTINUE TO BEAT COVID -19

I know that it is problematic for many of our community to use the internet but if there is someone who can get you set up you can use Skype and Facetime etc to communicate with friends and relatives. ZOOM is now popular for group meetings and conferencing.

Our weekly clap for our NHS and other key workers is continuing. Many shops are still closed or operating restricted access. But street representatives are keeping an eye on neighbours and helping with shopping and dog walking. An army of sew-ers and 3D printer owners are producing some PPE,

Children and some adults are decorating windows and streets for all to celebrate the NHS and have hope.

Many are having a clear-out and growing plants and putting out a lovely variety of toys etc for anyone to claim.

Some of us are discussing how we WILL be celebrating VE Day, complete with street music, flags and banners and our own picnics - at a sensible distance.

We have had lovely unseasonal weather, at least at the time of writing, but rain is on the way so now there will be more incentive to do those indoor activities. If you are interested in family history/history in general the National Archives is enabling free access to its digital collections until the site at Kew re-opens. You will be able to download records published through the online catalogue including First and Second World War records, Royal and Merchant Navy records, Wills from the jurisdiction of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, Migration records, 20th century Cabinet Papers and Security Service files and the Domesday Book.

The National Theatre is putting a free show online each week, Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals are on each weekend, Spring Harvest,, a big gathering of Christians which would have happened over Easter, is putting masses of material on a YouTube channel until the end of May. The Royal Albert Home events is a programme of exclusive sessions by the world's most talented artists, streaming from their homes to yours. The English National Ballet are streaming a performance every Wednesday for 48 hours.

HERE IS SOME ADVICE ON SCAMS FROM MONEY SAVING EXPERT MARTIN LEWIS

Banking industry body UK Finance and communications regulator Ofcom are warning of scam texts from criminals claiming to be from official Government sources, issuing you a fake 'relief' payout or a fine for leaving your home. Neither of these are genuine, so ignore and delete them. Don't click links. Criminals are also using a technique called 'spoofing', which can make a message appear in a chain of texts alongside previous genuine messages from that organisation.

Fraudulent articles and coronavirus alert services include a link to a fake website encouraging you to subscribe to a newsletter. Fake notification apps can infect and block your phone until you agree to pay them. Fraudsters can encourage you to take advantage of the downturn by making new investments that are not genuine and can result in huge financial losses.

Fake 'HMRC' tax refunds, council tax, or demands for tax payment emails direct you to a fake website that collects personal and financial details, often displaying the HMRC or Gov.uk logo. Some claim to be about unpaid bills, Amazon Prime and Netflix subscriptions or TV licenses.

Bogus emails and Facebook posts may offer a 'free voucher' or fake competition from well-known supermarkets and household brands. Some Criminals have been offering to do shopping for elderly people but take money and never return.

Someone might turn up at your door offering to clean your front doorstep or driveway. They may claim it's going to kill off bacteria and help prevent the spread of coronavirus, which of course is not backed up in any way. The Government and NHS are not testing for coronavirus unexpectedly at your home – so if someone turns up claiming to be able to test you for the illness, they are bogus.

Many of these scams also occur over the phone.

The National Cyber Security Centre has set up a Suspicious Email Reporting Service. Forward dodgy emails to report@phishing.gov.uk. If you have a hunch it might be a scam, report it and help them to act quickly.

Our March meeting took place in what seems like another life-time. We weren't really expecting corona virus to disrupt our lives so thoroughly. Plans were in hand for a day trip to Rosemoor and those going on the extended trip to Cornwall were looking forward to it. We were informed that the bank had instructed us to make cheques payable to the "Alveston Gardens Association" not the "AGA". Eastwood Park Garden Club was offering tickets for Bob Flowerdew's talk at the Armstrong Hall.

George Hargreaves' topical tip was to start mowing lawns if the weather improved but to set the mower blades a little higher than usual. Someone asked if raspberry cane suckers could be planted up and would they fruit. The answer was yes.

We then welcomed Richard Baldwin to talk about Ph and its relevance to gardening and to guide us through testing the soil samples which many of us had brought along.

First the question of exactly what is PH? Well it means "potential hydrogen" and is about to how acid or alkaline something is. Then there was the question of exactly what is soil? It is a mixture of sand, silt, clay and organic matter. Pure clay is very hard and very difficult to break down as Richard demonstrated by trying to crush a ball of dry clay in his hand. It needs to be wetted to be workable. Silt has a slightly soapy feel and settles out of solution if left to its own devices. Sand is rough, depending on the size of the individual grains and organic matter is very variable according to exactly what it derives from.

Soils vary greatly from area to area and sometimes are very variable within a small area. The Ph of a soil can theoretically vary from 0 (very acid) to 14 (very alkaline) with 7 being neutral. Soils at the more extreme ends of the range tend to be low in nutrients. A demonstration test of a soil sample from the village showed a Ph of about 7.4. Soils need to have a range of inorganic ingredients to enable plants to thrive. Nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium are the major ones with lesser amounts of calcium, magnesium and sulphur and a range of micro nutrients, boron, copper, iron, chlorine, manganese and iodine.

We then had a chance to test our own soil samples and this occupied us for quite a while. When everyone had finished and most of the clearing up was done Richard summed up.

Generally Alveston soil has a Ph of 7.2 to 7.6, a little alkaline. Most plants prefer a Ph of 6 to 6.5. His advice was to grow things that like the local conditions. If nutritional deficiencies occur they can usually be corrected with the right fertiliser. Adding iron or sulphur will improve the performance of raspberries, rhododendrons and azaleas and hydrangeas will have blue flowers rather than pink.

Apples need calcium to avoid bitter pit and tomatoes need high levels of potassium, magnesium and phosphate. Get it right and you will have lovely crops and displays of flowers was Richard's message.

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scrummages.**

DAVID AUSTIN

Judith and Kate wish to thank everyone for the cards, messages and support after David's sudden death. The cremation has taken place but we hope to have a celebration of David's life at a later date as he will be sadly missed.

David died of pancreatic cancer and a "JustGiving" page has been set up in his memory:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Kate-Kinsman>.

Donations go direct to Pancreatic Cancer UK

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ST HELEN'S SCHOOL NEWS



The total raised by both schools is already over £5000 (Before the end of April)

St Helen's, Alveston & St Mary's, Yate 'Captain Tom' challenge for:

Southmead Hospital Charity

Starts Monday 27th April and runs for 1 week until Monday 4th May

From the Twitter feed

Starting on Monday 27th April and lasting for only 1 week, children, staff and families connected to the school have been completing personal challenges in the spirit of 'Captain Tom', whilst complying with the government's lockdown guidelines. It could be 20 times up and down the stairs each day (140 times over a week), or 100 laps of the garden over the week. It could be an hour of trampolining every day (who knows how many bounces that could be!) or 50 press-ups a day (making 350 press-ups over the week).

Each of our children will try to raise sponsorship by sharing this page with friends and family telling them their specific goal! Do support us in aiming for our target of £1000 for Southmead Hospital Charity who will in turn support the staff and patients at Southmead who serve our communities.



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Please give generously, it would be nice to know how many wheelbarrow equivalents we can buy across the churches in North Severnside. In view of the current difficulties, fundraising for Christian Aid Week this year is being co-ordinated on a North Severnside basis, with donations being made to St Mary's Olveston acting on behalf of the whole Benefice.

Wherever possible, it would be appreciated if donations could be made by bank transfer to the St Mary's bank account, using the reference "Christian Aid":

Sort Code: 40-52-40

Account Number: 00029936

If you are able and wish to Gift Aid your donation, please let me know by e-mail at dlprothero@talk21.com.

If payment by this means is not possible, then cheques, payable to "St Mary's PCC Olveston", should be sent to Rev. David Moss at St Helen's Vicarage (off Greenhill), Gloucester Road, Alveston, BS35 3QT, again with an indication as to whether you wish to Gift Aid your donation.

Thank you.

THORNBURY AND DISTRICT U3A

We have nearly 1,800 members and around 90 different interest groups meeting at various venues throughout the area but there is always room for more! The groups mainly meet during the day and interests range from Archaeology to Walking, with all subjects in-between. Some meet weekly, other less often and they include physical activities, crafts, board and card games, organised visits to gardens and churches, concerts and theatre as well as purely “educational” topics. Details of all our groups, including Group Leader contact details, venue and times of meeting, can be found on our website – www.thornburyu3a.org.uk.

For further information visit our website or phone our Membership Secretary, Jackie Gitsham on 858438 or our Chairman, Norman Taylor on 418396.

You can see an example of research done on her family by Frances Houghton, member and a co-leader of the very popular U3A family History group, on Page 20

The bund on Down Road park area has been put in place and seems to have worked as the required deterrent. This is a reminder of what the roadside used to look like.



Alveston Parish Council information can currently be found at <https://alveston.org/alveston/alveston-parish-council> with regular updates.

Please visit the website for all the latest information.

Contact Alveston Parish Council on: 01454 413550
email: clerk@alvestonpc.co.uk

A MESSAGE FROM THE ARK!

We work for The Ark project which is part of The Methodist Church. We are committed to creating spaces where relationships can be built, and God’s love can be felt through conversation and in practical ways.

These times we are facing are very strange and can cause all sorts of feelings within us which can affect us in positive and negative ways. Sometimes we may just need to talk to another human and to share in a conversation. We are here and we care, so do ring us if you want to hear a friendly voice.

You can contact us on numbers below:
Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 9am and 5pm.
Wednesday and Friday between 2pm and 8pm.
Saturday between 10am and 1pm.

Jenny - 07873 117183 or email jenny.bourne@thearkbus.org.uk


Heidi – 07933 325281 or email heidi.carlin@thearkbus.org.uk

If there is no reply, please leave a message and we will get back to you.



“To be kind is more important than to be right. Many times, what people need is not a brilliant mind that speaks but a patient heart that listens.”

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We are closer to God when we are asking questions than when we think we have the answers.

Antoine Jankovic | local

This group is for anyone who wonders about God. We welcome those of no faith, a new faith, a long-standing faith, those who are just exploring, those who feel that maybe something is out there but not sure what it is, those who have stopped attending established Church but want to explore ways of reconnecting differently. anyone who feels they would like to talk about faith in their lives, for anyone who does not quite fit into the established Church model, for anyone who has been hurt or is confused. This group welcomes anyone who is interested and wonders – we are all on a journey and we can rummage for God together.

We usually meet in a café but due to the current constraints we are trialling meeting via Google Hangouts. We are sorry if there are some teething problems, this is new to us so please bear with us if there are some glitches ☐☐

We meet every Friday from 12.30 till 2pm. Join us when you can, we would love to meet you. I hope that this link works: meet.google.com/jqy-gqtm-hch

If you have a problem joining us please email jenny.bourne@thearkbus.org.uk or message us through our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/TheArkBus/>

CATS (CLIMATE ACTION THORNBURY AND SURROUNDINGS)

is a part of Sustainable Thornbury and was formed in response to the October 2018 report of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) which told the world of the need to become Carbon Neutral within just a few years if we are to ward off the worst impacts of climate change.

There is probably going to be a virtual meeting mid May. For further information and details of the next meetings contact cats@sustainablethornbury.org; www.sustainablethornbury.org



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ALVESTON ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

This has been a Spring like no other at the allotments and they have not become quite the hive of activity predicted in our previous article!

Whilst some plot holders have found themselves with more time than usual to spend on their plots - others are having to juggle tending their allotment with working full time and home schooling their children! Nevertheless many of us have been able to take advantage of the Government's rules on visiting allotments as part their daily exercise – with the result that the allotments are looking really lovely at the moment!

Broadbeans, sown and planted out before lockdown, are now coming into flower and will soon be producing good crops of young and tender beans. Early potatoes have come on enough to need earthing up to protect them from late frosts, and main crop potatoes are being planted. Now is also a good time to pull rhubarb stalks to add some sweetness to our meals.

The dry weather has meant more watering is necessary than would normally be expected in this month, particularly for peas and beans which were planted before the current restrictions. A delivery of manure which has quickly been snapped up to prepare ground for food-hungry crops such as peas, beans, brassicas, courgettes and sweet corn, as well as generally improving the soil.

We are pleased to welcome new plot holders taking over two recently vacated plots and hope they will enjoy all the benefits of working an allotment.

If you would be interested in joining us, please contact the clerk to the Parish Council Graham Smith on clerk@alvestonpc.co.uk to ask for your name to be added to the short waiting list.



Helmet Helpers:

Many residents of Alveston will be aware that copies of Helmet are collated on the last Tuesday of each month in the comfortable and welcoming Methodist Hall. What is often a surprise to visitors is how many volunteers turn up each month to help with this task. There are usually about 20 volunteers. The first ones to arrive are usually Gill Smith, Brian Lee and Nick Barnard who are on the scene between 8 and 9 a.m. to receive the delivery from Motion Printers, set up tables and chairs and staplers so all is ready when other volunteers start to arrive and begin to put the loose sheets together to make up a total consignment of 1,500 magazines. Wallpaper rollers are useful tools to flatten the Helmets before they are collected and travel along the “production line” to two stapling machines where highly skilled operators are working to complete the job unless there is a flyer to put in each copy. (Putting in flyers by hand makes the job much longer but brings in extra funds towards the printing costs.) The collation is usually finished within two hours during which time volunteers are able to chat to their friends and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and biscuits too.

This way of collating your monthly Helmet is a far cry from the methods used earlier in our 50 year history. Kathy Edmond recently told me about the days when the floor of a room in Maggie and Brian Hardy’s house in Davids Close was used as the Assembly line, complete with the helpers young children running around!

The collated, rolled and stapled Helmets, with flyers inserted if necessary, are meanwhile being counted into labelled boxes and bags and stacked ready to be taken away by some of the collators who double up as deliverers. The bulk of the Helmet boxes are loaded into two cars. Nick and Diane Barnards’ car is bound for the village run while Brian and Elaine Lee travel to Rudgeway and Earthcott Green and the edges of Alveston and A38. Copies of Helmet are also delivered to various businesses in Thornbury as well as the Library, Chantry, Town Hall and some advertisers. Diane, our Editor also sends one to the British Library.

An army of those who deliver around the village and the more “isolated” areas of Rudgeway and Earthcott Green is approximately 70 more volunteers so the total number of volunteers who are involved in the production, collation and delivery of your monthly Helmet is close to 100 especially if we include other volunteers who have offered to temporarily take over a round when illness or holidays prevents the usual volunteer doing a round. The Helmet Committee members are most grateful to all of these willing volunteers. There is always room for more so please consider adding your name to the list by contacting Gill Smith if you wish to help on collation mornings and Elaine Lee if you wish to help to deliver.

Please note that the number of volunteers does not include those who send in occasional articles, poems, information about forthcoming events etc. all of which is vital for Helmet to continue to be popular during the next 500 editions. We would be particularly interested to hear or read any historical information about Helmet or items of particular interest to our area.

Thank you.

Elaine Lee. 01454 419322 elainelee46@virginmedia.com



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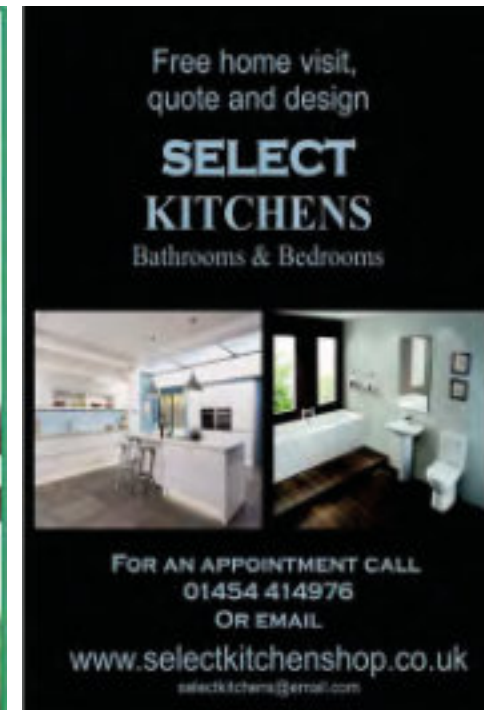
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A few years ago, we all saw something no human eye had seen before - a photograph of our planet taken from a space ship. Such a photograph reminds us that the earth has definite dimensions. It has a certain size, and its resources are limited. Many contemporary "prophets of doom" have taken up this idea and warned us that the cumulative effects of three things will considerably impoverish human life in a few generations' time, if not sooner. These three things are Pollution, OVER usage of irreplaceable natural resources, the growth of world population. As someone has put it - there will be standing room only, and we shall be knee-deep in garbage. I hope he was exaggerating!

There's plenty of room here for debate. Many would argue that the more sombre prophets of doom are exaggerating. After all, pollution can be dealt with, and is being dealt with in some cases. Bristol air (Alveston air?), for example, is cleaner than it used to be, and many rivers are cleaner, too. Population is stable in many western countries, and there is hope that it will become stable elsewhere. Furthermore, no-one can predict with any certainty what the natural resources of the planet are. "Vast reserves may still await discovery, and there is every hope that technology will develop new sources of energy and new materials, as oil and some metals run out of supply. After all, science is one of the greatest success stories in human history. It has exceeded man's wildest expectations in the past, so why not in the future?

It remains true, however, that the planet's resources are limited, even though there is debate as to how limited they are. We can, by thoughtlessness and irresponsibility, do great harm to our environment. The world is not a limitless tuck shop to be plundered. The quality of our environment depends very much on our decisions. We are learning again what is, after all, the Biblical thinking of Genesis 1 - 3 that man should act as a responsible steward in God's creation.

What can we do as individuals? Often we seem helpless in the face of international issues. Nevertheless, we can do something. We can try to be informed. We can encourage governments to take appropriate action - such as increasing foreign aid, legislation against pollution, encouraging the re-cycling of materials and so on. In our personal lives do we have to "live simply in order that others might simply live" "by rejecting the mentality of a society which insists upon ever-increasing patterns of consumption? It is by no means clear that "Spaceship Earth" can support its first-class passengers without harm to others. This may mean accepting a lower standard of living in material terms; but need this mean a lower quality of life?

This subject raises big questions - in economics and politics as well as ethics. Two books I have found helpful on these themes are "PLUNDERED PLANET" by Edward Rogers (Robert Denholme Press), "ENOUGH IS ENOUGH" by John V Taylor (SCM Press).



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Perennial herbs, Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) seem to be doing particularly well this spring. They spend the majority of their time underground as white bulbs, emerging to flower from April along roadsides and in woodland clearings, not under a dense canopy.

Common names: bluebell, English bluebell, British bluebell, English harebell, wood bell, bell bottle, wild hyacinth, cuckoo's boots, granfer griggles, witches' thimbles, lady's nightcap, fairy flower, cra'tae (crow's toes)....

Sweet-smelling flowers are usually deep violet-blue (but can be white or pink), bell-shaped, with six petals and up-turned tips. They nod or droop to one side of the flowering stem and have creamy white-coloured pollen inside. Up to 20 flowers can grow on one inflorescence. The Spanish bluebell (*Hyacinthoides hispanica*) grows upright, with flowers all around the stem, not drooping to one side. Hybrids are a mix of the British and Spanish, of less value to our native insects. Although often very similar in appearance to our native bluebell, they might threaten its existence by out-competing it and diluting the gene pool.

Many insects benefit from the early flowering of bluebells. Woodland butterflies, bees and hoverflies feed on their nectar. Bees can bite a hole in the bottom of the flower thus reaching nectar without pollinating the flower. Bluebell woods are believed to be intricately woven with fairy enchantments, used to trap humans. In the language of flowers, the bluebell is a symbol of humility, constancy, gratitude and everlasting love. It is said that if you turn a bluebell flower inside-out without tearing it, you will win the one you love, and if you wear a wreath of bluebells you will only be able to speak the truth.

Almost half of the world's bluebells are found in the UK. They can take years to recover after footfall damage. If a bluebell's leaves are crushed, they die back from lack of food as the leaves cannot photosynthesise. Bluebells are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). It is against the law to intentionally pick, uproot or destroy bluebells. Digging up the plant or bulb in the countryside is prohibited and landowners are prohibited from removing bluebells from their land to sell.

So now you know!

Information from the Woodland Trust & National Trust

We have a request for issues 157 – 177 (about 1985-87) and 180-209 (1988 to end 1990) and. 233-255 (April 1993-June 1995) if anyone has a store in their loft.

We need your articles by the 1st of the month preceding publication. Send to

alvestonmag@gmail.com

Or post to 'Helmet Magazine', 1 Beech Close, Alveston, BS35 3NH.

Deadlines – JUNE edition: Wed 1st May for distribution by **Wed 3rd June**

JULY edition June 1st for distribution on or by June 30th

This may not happen as what we can do obviously depends upon Covid-19 progression, government advice and availability of personnel

Alveston Helmet relies on a large network of 'deliverers' who have been involved for many years. We are, as always, grateful for your involvement. We'd like to draw your attention to the change of date - the June Helmet will arrive with you on TUESDAY 2nd June. Please let us know if this is a logistical problem

NOTICEBOARD

Helmet dates 2020

We collate/deliver on the LAST Tuesday of each month

NOTE exception is June 2nd instead of May 26th

The deadline is the 1st of the previous month. We are still taking our usual breaks for August and January

Coroana Permitting

Edition	Deadline	Collation
May	APRIL 1	online edition?
June	MAY 1	JUN 2
July	JUNE 1	JUNE 30
Sept	AUG 1	AUG 25
Oct	SEPT 1	SEPT 29
Nov	OCT 1	OCT 27

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Methodist Church news and archives,
pg 11 & 15

Report from the WI ,pg 18

A Family History Journey, pg 20

Useful Contacts, pg 23

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Alveston Allotments update, pg 41

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Nature Notes – Bluebells, pg 46

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